

REPORT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CNP MEM HQ – PARIS 29th of January 2010

Chairman: Sam Lambourn
Rapporteur: Alexandre Rodríguez

1. Welcome

The Chairman Sam Lambourn welcomed all attendees to the meeting and invited the members to introduce themselves around the table. Apologies were received from Jacques Pichon (FROM Bretagne) and Víctor Badiola (OPPAO).

It was also noted that the following representatives acted as substitutes of the usual seat holders on behalf of their respective organizations:

- * Rory Crawford replacing Kara Brydson (RSPB Scotland / BirdLife International)
- * Louize Hill replacing Iwan Ball (WWF)
- * Bruno Dachicourt replacing Jacques Bigot (CFTC-ETF)

Finally, the Chairman conveyed apologies on behalf of María Fuensanta Candela from DG MARE of the European Commission as she was not able to attend this meeting due to illness.

The list of participants is detailed in Annex I.

- Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with no changes with the understanding that there may be a need to move and/or alter the order of discussions of topics as the meeting progresses in order to fulfill the actions.

- Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting (Madrid, 8th of September 2009)

The meeting report was adopted in full and without changes.

- Update on the actions agreed at the last meeting:

The Secretariat (Alexandre Rodríguez) briefed members on the state of progress regarding the agreed actions of the previous meeting (see Annex II).

2. Reports from the Working Groups (VIa – EC Vb)

Working Group 1 - West of Scotland

The Chairman of Working Group 1 (Bertie Armstrong) provided the meeting with a brief overview of progress made in relation to the actions coming from the Working Group on the following topics:

- Principles and categories for setting Fishing Opportunities for 2010;
- Change in timing of anglerfish surveys in Area VI;
- Long term management plan (LTMP) for West of Scotland Haddock
- Stakeholder engagement in MPAs /MCZ consultation in UK waters.

The members discussed these items and agreed the following:

- Principles for setting Fishing Opportunities:

There is a need to re-think and submit to further scrutiny the principles or categories established by the Commission to set fishing opportunities under the “Policy Statement”. These principles are considered the fundamental pillars or “building blocks” for adopting decisions on fisheries management but to date they have proven to be both inconsistent in relation to the allocation of TACs (e.g. VIa Haddock) and insensitive to socio-economic aspects (e.g. reduction of TACs due to non-use of quota not reflecting reality of some fisheries).

It is necessary to start with preparatory work, both at industry and at RAC level, to influence the process by providing evidence-based proposals on these categories before the adoption of the Policy Statement for 2011 by the Commission.

Stéphanie Tachoures and Bertie Armstrong offered to send documents produced by the French and Scottish fishing industry containing comments concerning to the Policy Statement as background documents to feed into the debate.

Actions:

Sean O’Donoghue to draft a note on behalf of the NWWRAC expressing differences in opinion and reservations regarding the approach followed by the Commission in relation to the current classification of stocks by categories. The note should also include a request to the Commission of a review of these categories based on proposals coming from the RAC; and, from an industry perspective, an enhanced role of STECF in order to take socio-economic considerations into account.

Secretariat to liaise with Stéphanie and Bertie and circulate the papers from the French and Scottish fishing industries and also any other relevant contributions from members.

- Change in timing of anglerfish surveys for Area VIa:

The detailed explanation given by Mr. Paul Fernandes (Marine Scotland) was not fully satisfactory for some members, as doubts still remain as to the implications of the estimation of the absolute abundance indexes for the stock for ICES assessment and advice; and the consistency and compatibility of data as a result of the change in timing from winter to spring.

Action:

Secretariat to invite Paul Fernandes to attend the forthcoming Working Group 1 meeting in Madrid and to provide a brief presentation on the outcomes of the anglerfish surveys, with the aim to continue deliberations on this issue.

- LTMP for West of Scotland Haddock:

The WG1 Chairman updated the members on the state of play of this topic. Basically, ICES is currently in the process of agreeing a response to Commission's request on evaluation of a proposed management plan. It is planned that this will happen by the end of January – beginning of February.

Action:

NWWRAC members to progress on work and discuss next steps in future meetings, with the possibility of setting up a Focus Group.

- Marine Protected Areas and Marine Conservation Zones in UK waters:

It was acknowledged by some members that discussions are already taking place on this topic in areas such as Rockall and Hatton Bank; and that the involvement and participation of stakeholders in the context of the new UK Marine Policy consultation process needs to be streamlined. The meeting was informed that a presentation by JNCC (UK) will be given in a forthcoming Horizontal Working Group meeting on Marine Spatial Planning on 4th March in Madrid about the state of consultation, timescale, definition of map and areas suggested as MCZs, impacts on fishing activities, etc within UK waters.

Working Group 2 - West of Ireland and Celtic Sea (VII bcfghjk)

The Chairman of Working Group 2 (Hugo González) provided the meeting with a brief overview of progress made in relation to the agreed actions:

- LTMP for Northern Hake: current situation and future prospects
- EAPO proposal on a management plan for Celtic Sea Cod
- EC Workshop on Market Aspects for Fishing Products;
- Review of Gear Marking Regulation: state of affairs.

The members discussed these items and agreed the following:

- Management Plan for Northern Hake:

This process is now paused pending of the outcomes and conclusions from the ICES Benchmark Workshop (BW) WKROUND to be held the 9-16 February. It is a fact that there are doubts among scientific community concerning estimations of growth rate (mean size) by age population, and its influence on the assessment of the stock abundance review and biological reference points (biomass and fishing mortality), etc.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Commission has formally asked ICES to review the reference points etc after the BW and that it is intended that a formal proposal of Regulation will be presented during the last quarter of 2010 for adoption in 2011. Due to ICES internal procedures, it is very likely that there will be no progress before the end of March.

Action:

Hugo González to prepare a draft letter to the Commission asking for a reasonable period of time for consultation after the BW to allow this topic to be debated at Working Group and Focus Group (if agreed) level.

- Update on Celtic Sea Cod:

The WG2 Chairman invited Sean O'Donoghue as EAPO chairman, to present the state of play of this organisation in relation to the development of a proposal for a LTMP for Celtic Sea Cod. Mr. O'Donoghue explained that EAPO had spent a considerable amount of time debating this topic during 2009 and that this is still ongoing. Several discussion papers had been produced involving all relevant fishing interests (FR, BE, UK, IE, ESP). However events had since then overtaken the work done (i.e. decision of roll-over of technical conservation measures for 18 months; maintenance of Trevoise closure). Under the new scenario of co-decision, it is unlikely that there will be a draft proposal for development of a LTMP for Celtic Sea Cod in 2011 (co-decision will probably mean 2012-2013)

Mr. O'Donoghue reported that a two-step approach was suggested within EAPO:

1. To identify initiatives for enhancing coordination between national scientific institutes (FR, IE, UK, BE), for example using observers on commercial vessels in order to resolve discrepancy of views about the state of the stock.
2. To investigate the possibility of establishing a comprehensive management plan to include all the mixed fisheries occurring in the eastern part of Celtic Sea (sub areas VII_{fg}). If agreed, a study group could be established in the near future.

In relation to the first point, all members endorsed the need for working with scientists to improve the quality of assessments. Weak science leads to uncertainty and an automatic application of the precautionary approach.

Barrie Deas proposed writing to the Commission asking them to create a regional taskforce including scientists, RACs and Member States authorities, to address and tackle data deficiencies existing not only for Celtic Sea Cod but for several other stocks in North Western Waters. The Fisheries Data Dependent Workshop to be held in Galway in August 2010 was mentioned as an important part of this process.

It was agreed that the second point, would be discussed under agenda item 3. However, some members advanced their fear that the scope of this suggested broader plan could result in a proposal from the Commission on an effective limitation of access (days at sea) for other fleets that neither target nor catch cod. It was also noted that VIId cod is attached to the North Sea (IV) for both assessment and management purposes.

Action:

Barrie Deas to draft a letter asking the Commission to consider the creation of a regional taskforce to address and tackle data deficiencies existing not only for Celtic Sea Cod but for several other stocks in North Western Waters.

- Market Policy and Common Market Organisations:

Members noted the following points:

1. The Commission has made it clear that this is a horizontal issue that should be dealt with by ACFA. Some members supported this view and considered it unnecessary to duplicate work being done by WG3 of ACFA particularly as many RAC members are also members of ACFA. However, others said that this should not exclude the possibility of holding discussions within the NWWRAC and submitting a position paper to ACFA.

The NWWRAC Chairman asked the members to postpone a decision on this topic until agenda item 3.

Finally, the Secretariat reminded the members of the procedure of consultation as set by the Commission and highlighted that this topic has been linked to the reform of CFP. According to the latest work programme submitted by the Commission in January 2010, a Proposal of Regulation on the reform of the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products is due to be presented in the last quarter of 2010.

- Gear Marking Regulation:

The Commission response (dated 16/12/2009) to the NWWRAC enquiry (dated 11/09/2009) was analyzed in detail. It was agreed that the NWWRAC would closely follow progress on this issue.

Regarding the cost for translation of the BIM report (“*Study of the Review of Regulation (EC) 356/2005 on marking and identification of passive fishing gear for the fleets operating in Community waters*”), the NWWRAC Chairman stated the NWWRAC could not afford the translation of the whole report in French and Spanish as this would compromise the annual budget for translation. However, he proposed that a translation of the executive summary could be provided to the members if necessary. The members agreed that a translation of the executive summary was not required.

Working Group 3 – English Channel (VIIde)

The Chairman of Working Group 3 (Daniel Lefèvre) provided the meeting with a brief overview of the progress on actions coming from the Working Group on the following topics:

- Technical Conservation Measures for Channel Scallops
- Management of 7e Sole: recent progress in review of LTMPs
- Request for better science on stock status and discard survival rates for VIIde Cod and Plaice stocks; and Rays in area VII.

The members discussed these items and agreed the following:

- Technical conservation measures for scallops:

Members expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of explanation given by the Commission in its response (dated 30/11/2009) to the NWWRAC advice (dated 11/9/2009) on this topic, in particular the reason for the Commission proposal to establish a minimum landing size of 11 cm for scallops in both areas of the Channel.

It was agreed to underline to the Commission the importance of this species in Europe in terms of production and market value, and the disruption and economic consequences this measure would cause when there is no scientific evidence to support such a move.

Action:

Secretariat to ask the Commission for further explanation of the reason for the proposed unification of the minimum landing size of for scallops.

- Management of 7e Sole: recent progress in review of LTMPs:

Due to the absence of Jim Portus, WG3 rapporteur and NWWRAC representative at the meeting of STECF subgroup SGMOS on this topic (Lisbon, 25/11/2009), it was decided to postpone the update and discussions to the Working Groups in Madrid.

- Better science and studies on survival rates of discards for rays, cod and plaice:

It was agreed that this topic would be further discussed at the Working Group 3 meeting in Madrid.

- Other items:

It was agreed that marketing aspects related to the management of crustaceans would be discussed within Working Group 3. The WG3 Chairman stated that national regulations implementing management measures in countries such as France (TCMs, MLS, closures...) were not followed by other Member States and market prices had dropped more than 60% on average.

It was also agreed that if possible a presentation of the Interreg Project CHARM 3 - “Channel Integrated Approach for Marine Resources Management”, embodied under the ARCHE MANCHE initiative, should take place at the forthcoming Working Group 3 in Madrid.

Action:

Secretariat to invite project manager or co-ordinator for Project CHARM 3 to give a presentation at the Working Group 3 in Madrid (3rd of March).

Working Group 4 – Irish Sea (VIIa)

The Chairman of Working Group 4 (Lorcan O’Cinnéide) provided the meeting with a brief overview of progress on the following topics:

- Review of management measures for Irish Sea stocks
- Management measures for Nephrops stocks
- Assessment of regulatory impact of management measures for oyster fishery in Foyle.

- Management measures for the Irish Sea:

The Chairman gave an overview on the main features and outcomes of the Focus Group meeting held in Belfast the 30th of September 2009¹. The most notable aspect of the meeting was that views from the fishing industry and the European Commission were expressed in the same forum. Indeed, most of the relevant scientists with expertise for this area were also present and provided specific input on particular stocks (cod, nephrops, whiting...). It was agreed to organize a follow-up meeting with the aim of agreeing alternative management measures to be introduced over time in order to mitigate short-term “losses / pains” (e.g. present catch composition rules for whitefish)

Brendan Price highlighted the problem of data and information deficit, and the need for scientists to have better data for Irish Sea Stocks. Mr. Price stated that there have already been a number of good initiatives proposed by this RAC (e.g. Irish Sea discard and data collection programme) but they have been not as successful as they could have been to date due to the lack of resources.

¹ Full report of this meeting is available at NWWRAC website:
http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/MINUTES_NWWRAC_FG_Meeting_Irish_Sea_Management_Belfast_300909_EN.pdf

Mr. Price affirmed with regret that, unless initiatives on Irish Sea are resourced and implemented, his organisation would be calling at next Working Group 4 meeting for a proposal of closure of Irish Sea to all trawling and non-selective fishing.

He expressed concern that fishing in the Irish Sea might evolve towards a single species fishery, which would be against the aims enshrined by the Commission of promoting biodiversity and recovery. He added it was crucial to determine how to access and make use of available funds such as EFF.

The WG4 Chairman agreed with this last comment but noted that the multilayer structure of the RACs (fishing industry, other interest members, national administrations, Member States...) makes it difficult in practice to apply for this funding.

- Management measures for Nephrops stocks:

The WG4 Chairman gave an overview of the main features and outcomes of the Focus Group meeting held in Edinburgh the 3rd of November of 2009². He praised the strong level of commitment and work undertaken by the various national interests represented within the RAC, who had made difficult choices involving negative effects for their own fleets.

The NWWRAC Chairman and many members thanked the Chairman of the Focus Group, Mr. O’Cinnéide, for the personal work devoted in putting forward this advice in record time. The Focus Group Chairman replied that merits should be shared among all members who had worked hard to find an agreed position: coherent advice supported by science was produced and presented to the Commission and STECF on time. It had a material impact on decisions made at the December Council and was effectively incorporated into the EU Regulation (i.e. closure for Porcupine bank), which was considered by the members as a good example of the work of the RAC in providing advice to European institutions and Member States.

- Consultation with stakeholders on regulatory impact of management measures for Oyster Fishery in Foyle Area:

The WG4 Chairman and the Secretariat briefed the members on the letter received in September 2009 from the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in Ireland and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland³.

² Full report of this meeting is available at NWWRAC website:
http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/MINUTES_FG_NEPHROPS_EDINBURGH_031109_EN.pdf

³ Letter is available at the meetings section of the NWWRAC Website:
http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Letter_Consultation_Loughs_Fishery_080909_EN.pdf

This consultation invited the NWWRAC to comment and consider the proposed conservation and management measures for the oyster fishery in the Foyle Area (cross-border areas of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough), and to approve retrospectively the four regulations introduced in 2008.

In accordance with article 9 of Council Regulation (EC) No2371/2002, the NWWRAC must be consulted on any fisheries management proposal in North Western Waters (inshore or offshore) that might have an impact (even if small) on fishing activities and fleets belonging to two or more Member States (in this case, UK and Ireland)

Members agreed that in this case, the regulations would have marginal interstate effect given the semi-aquaculture nature of this fishery. No objections were made to the regulations presented and the consultation was deemed to be approved and formally signed off. However, it was also agreed that in future the NWWRAC would continue to analyze such cases on an individual basis, and would not relinquish this responsibility by giving 'blanket approval' in advance.

3. Discussion on priority areas of work proposed for 2010

3.1. Discussion of topics for selection as subjects for Focus Group meetings

The NWWRAC Chairman explained that to date three formal applications had been received within the agreed deadline for focus group nominations. He invited the Working Group Chairmen and/or the promoters of these nominations to make a brief summary to the members:

1) West of Scotland Haddock LTMP:

Ian Gatt and Bertie Armstrong underlined the importance of developing a Long Term Management Plan for this stock and stated that the Scottish Executive would be willing to host a Focus Group to make progress on this subject. It was noted that the European Commission wanted to find a fast track mechanism to achieve this rather than be subject to the inevitable delay associated with co-decision.

2) Northern hake:

Hugo González explained the members the suggested terms of reference for this meeting. The Galician Regional Government, Xunta de Galicia, was suggested as candidate to host this Focus Group.

3) Socio-economics aspects of fishing activity:

Brendan Price introduced this topic which had been raised at previous WG4 meetings. It comprises a wide number of topics and cross-cutting issues around Europe: data collection of biodiversity; definition of sustainable practices; impact assessments of regulations and other maritime activities; market prices; unemployment and underemployment; etc.

The WG4 Chairman and most members endorsed this proposal as positive and constructive, although it was noted that perhaps it may be beyond the scope of a Focus Group and should be approached at interRAC level.

Another suggestion was to focus on the socio-economic dimension within the context of CFP reform discussions.

The importance of defining a clear set of objectives at the outset was underlined. Sean O'Donoghue reported that the Pelagic RAC had set up a number of meetings in relation to this topic with economists, but that progress was hampered by a lack of economic data for the fleet apart from that available from the Commission. It had proved very difficult to gain meaningful traction with this subject.

He advised that before organising such a meeting, attention should be given to establish the scale of the problem and topics to address. Also it was important to check first if we have the tools to make the difference and be relevant. Perhaps an "informal" group of 3-4 members meeting with experts could develop ToR for a Focus Group

The NWWRAC Chairman encouraged members to discuss this topic with the other RACs and pool experiences before taking the next step (e.g. interRAC workshop)

Barrie Deas stated that we need to find a way to identify socio-economic aspects and data related to them. It is very important to think carefully on the scope and scale (port level, regional level, sea basin level...) of analysis and data collection. Mr. Deas offered to provide NFFO annual fishing reports, delivered as pilot projects containing useful information that feed into ICES assessments (based on interviews with skippers). These reports were regarded by the NFFO as a potential powerful tool to influence policy and complement scientific information.

Actions:

The members agreed to set up a steering committee and discuss this topic with other RACs, either under interRAC meetings or other format. A suggested first step would be to liaise at RAC Secretariat level to start a scoping study and define the Terms of Reference and proposed way forward.

It was also agreed to encourage the possibility of setting up phone conferences together with using the forum website, in order to make the most economic and efficient use of available information.

- Other topics discussed:

* Celtic Sea Cod

The members agreed that some extra time should be dedicated to discuss this topic either during the forthcoming Working Groups or at a separate Focus Group depending on budget availability.

* Technical Conservation Measures

Members agreed to progress with this topic and in particular to give specific input on temporary measures established for Area VI.

Action:

Secretariat to ask the European Commission for clarification on timing and content on EC policy on Technical Conservation Measures.

* Crustaceans

The WG3 Chairman suggested that, subject to budget constraints, further discussions on this topic could be held at informal meetings in the fringes of the RAC (e.g. the recent first meeting on crab management held the previous day) and report back to the NWWRAC members about its outcomes. In the longer term, perhaps a workshop on crustaceans could be jointly hosted with the North Sea RAC.

- Final decision on focus group meetings:

Members endorsed the following focus groups:

- West of Scotland Haddock
- Northern Hake

With respect to the third focus group proposed, Socio-economics aspects of fisheries management, it was decided that the Secretariat would liaise with other RACs to analyze previous experience and define a way forward.

Meanwhile this third slot for Focus Group would be left open for the time being so that it could be used for covering any future need.

Finally, The Secretariat clarified that, depending on budget availability, there would be the possibility of allocating Horizontal Working Groups for dealing with strategic issues in the margins of the Working Groups (Paris, July), Executive Committee (Madrid, May and September) or General Assembly (Dublin, October) meetings if needed.

3.2. Horizontal issues for discussion at Working Groups:

* Deep sea regime access

The Secretariat informed the members that the Commission had produced a consultation paper seeking to amend the Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002 establishing specific access requirements and associated conditions applicable to fishing for deep-sea stocks.

The deadline for consultations is the 12th of March by which time the NWWAC should input advice in relation to the policy options presented. In order to develop this advice, members were asked to send input and views to the Secretariat ahead of the WGs in Madrid where the issue will be discussed and agreed.

Charline Gaudin summarized the three management options presented by the Commission and argued that it was very difficult to choose one of them. From a legal point of view, options 1 (to adapt Regulation 2002 in line with new measures of the Control Regulation) and 2 (to apply NEAFC rules) were considered as legal obligations rather than a real option. Therefore, no real choice was presented other than going for option 3.

Action:

It was agreed that members would send to the Secretariat their comments in due time before the Working Group meetings. The Secretariat would compile the views and produce a short paper to be presented and discussed at Working Group 1 in Madrid.

* Marine Spatial Planning

As discussed previously, it was agreed that a Horizontal Working Group meeting would take place in Madrid on 4th of March 2010. Rory Crawford remarked that this meeting would not only look at Marine Protected Areas, but also deal with a wide range of activities affecting the sea and marine environment.

* Reform of OCM

It was agreed that ACFA was the correct forum for this horizontal issue and was recognised as such by the Commission. Members were encouraged to put their views directly to ACFA.

* CFP Reform:

Alexandre Rodriguez updated the members on the timing of the process provided by the Commission (i.e. mid-march: review of contributions received; may-June: publication of impact assessment report; end of 2010: presentation of a proposal of Regulation).

A series of seminars on different aspects of the reform have been organised by the Commission over the next few weeks/months and members were encouraged to coordinate their participation in these meetings.

Action: *Secretariat to keep members informed of the CFP-related seminars.*

* Data deficiency:

As reported previously in the meeting Barrie Deas suggested creating a regional task force consisting of RAC members, scientists, and Member State authorities to work on this issue for particular stocks as a pilot study case for the area.

This initiative might be linked to the CFP reform as an example of how a future management role for RACs might work. Further discussions would continue within Working Groups by identifying the data deficiencies existing in several fisheries.

Emiel Brouckaert noted that it is very likely that the Belgian presidency will include this topic on its agenda for the second semester of 2010.

Action:

Barrie Deas to submit a draft letter to the Secretariat for circulation and endorsement by the Ex Co, addressed to the Commission, scientific institutes, and concerned Member States, announcing that the NWWRAC is to establish a regional task force as described above for the area. The letter would also suggest that NWWRAC Secretariat and Chairman would eventually meet with Commission representatives to discuss technicalities and mechanisms of functioning (funding, timeframe, etc.)

Action:

Secretariat to contact organizers of Galway seminar to ensure RAC participation at this meeting.

* Irish Sea management measures:

The Chairman of WG4 decided to continue this work within the Irish Sea Working Group and postpone any follow-up meeting until further progress is made and there is budget for it.

4. Report from Secretariat on work progress to date

Due to time constraints, it was agreed to put this presentation onto the meetings section of the NWWRAC website where it will be available to all members.

5. Report on Non-RAC meetings attended on behalf of the NWWRAC

The following Non RAC meetings were reported on:

- ICES Workshop on Revising Fisheries Advice – The form of the ICES Reform (WKFORM – Lisbon, 1-3 December 2009): oral briefing made by Stéphanie Tachaires.
- Commission’s seminar on Rights Based Management (Brussels, 25th of January 2010): oral briefing made by Luc Corbisier.
- V Annual Meeting between ICES and the RACs (MIRAC 2010 – Gdynia, 26-27 January 2010): oral briefing made by Alexandre Rodríguez.

The remaining non RAC meetings were not reported orally due to absence of the NWWRAC representatives at the meeting:

- OSPAR Working Group on Selection of Habitats and Species for OSPAR list (Paris, 14-16 October 2009) – NWWRAC representatives: Julien Lamothe and Jim Portus.
- STECF Subgroup SGMOS on review of LTMP for Sole (Lisbon, 25th of November 2009) – NWWRAC representative: Jim Portus.

Reports of all the meetings above mentioned are available on the meetings section of the NWWRAC website - Direct link:

www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=387&language=English

6. CFCA Work Programme for 2010

In absence of the first NWWRAC representative at the CFCA Advisory Board, Mr. Jacques Pichon, Alexandre Rodríguez informed the members on the current state of the control, inspection and surveillance activities of the CFCA for North Western Waters for 2010.

It was stressed that the NWWRAC needed to be proactive and aim to submit to the CFCA a proposal of areas of work in North Western Waters for 2011 by the end of the first quarter of 2010 if possible.

It was noted that the CFCA had not programmed any new joint deployment plan for control, inspection, and surveillance activities in North Western Waters this year, but it had combined the control and inspection programme for the Cod fishery in the North Sea and North Western Waters under a single JDP⁴.

⁴ See point 2.3. of CFCA Work Programme for 2010

Finally, it was suggested that the NWWRAC should explore the possibility of co-organizing with the CFCA a conference on control for 2011 engaging all relevant parties (stakeholders, Commission, national inspectors and control authorities), similar to those already held for the North Sea and the Baltic Sea (and one with the High-Seas on the way).

Action:

NWWRAC representatives (J. Pichon and Hugo González) and Secretariat to progress on work and actions above mentioned and find areas of cooperation for future.

7. Conflicts with use of OMEGA net gauge meter: proposed way forward

Mr. Hugo González briefed the members on the problems arising from the introduction of OMEGA net gauge (mandatory since 1st of September 2009) and the practical consequences for the industry due to differences in results of measurements of mesh sizes and expressing his doubts about the reliability of this device. In this particular, he stated that the CFCA website acknowledged the need for the periodic calibration of the gauge but did not specify the frequency of these calibrations.

Mr. González said that a letter had been submitted by ARVI (PO from Vigo) to the Spanish government requesting the application of this device be delayed until it has been fully tested and its results are 100% reliable.

The fishing industry members agreed that this was an issue of enormous importance and registered their concern with the Commission's apparent reluctance to consult further with stakeholders about the implementation of this Regulation. It was noted that there was a communications failure, together with transitional problems with the application of this device by Member States as well as the intrinsic problems of the net gauge itself.

The fishing industry members agreed that measurements obtained using the gauge were not consistent. They reported, as examples, some cases where trawl nets that were verified to be above the legal mesh size before use, were subsequently measured with a lower mesh size after only a few hours fishing, and also the different materials that the net is made of may affect the final result. This has very significant consequences in terms of costs and effort when purchasing new nets in order to comply with the regulation.

It was agreed to send a note to the Community Fisheries Control Agency, the European Parliament and the European Commission outlining these problems and asking for the establishment of a Margin of Tolerance (e.g. 5% variation) between the measurements given by the manual device and the Omega gauge until the later device is improved and its accuracy fully tested and guaranteed. National control agencies should also be informed that there is mounting evidence that the Omega gauge is not fit for purpose.

Actions: *Hugo González to draft a note as above to be agreed by all members. To progress and develop further work both at Working Group and at interRAC level with the aim of signing a joint letter by all RAC Chairmen.*

8. Impact of extractive activities in the seabed

Hugo González alerted members to an article from Intrafish (December 2009) and an ICES Working Group report (August 2009) on the effects of the removal of marine sediments on the marine environment in northern European and Atlantic waters for the period 1998-2004.

Rory Crawford agreed that this was an important issue that could be addressed at the Working Group on Marine Spatial Planning. It would be useful to request more information from the Commission and ICES. He noted that important work had already been undertaken mapping fishing activities and activities involving renewable energies, but very little was known about the real impact of all types of extractive activities.

Luc Corbisier observed that in Belgium, there are sandbanks and underwater dunes that have been removed and there is a perception of a huge volume of extractions.

Actions:

Secretariat to contact with all relevant bodies and compile information to be presented in the forthcoming Working Group on Marine Spatial Planning, in Madrid the 4th of March of 2010.

Hugo González to draft a formal letter asking the Commission to minimize the impact of these activities.

10. AOB

The NWWRAC Executive Secretary, Dr. Conor Nolan, proposed formally inviting a representative of the European Parliament Fisheries Committee to attend future Executive Committee meetings now that the Lisbon Treaty had been ratified and the European Parliament attained much greater significance with advent of co-decision.

Members agreed with this proposal but made it clear that the NWWRAC should continue to forward its advice and opinions to the Commission in the first place.

The NWWRAC Chairman, Sam Lambourn, reported that the Commission will announce an ICES Training Programme on Stock assessment for stakeholders with little or no scientific background, to take place later this year, which may be of interest to some members. It is intended this programme will increase the general level of understanding of the assessment process. The Secretariat will liaise with ICES to know more details about this training course and keep the members informed on any news.

Meeting was adjourned at 17:10 h

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE MEETING

NWWRAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – PARIS 29 JANUARY 2010			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Kristel	Adriaenssens	NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Ex.Com. Member - WG1 Chairman
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale	Ex.Com. Member
Luc	Corbisier	Stichting voor Duurzame Visserij Ontwikkeling	Ex.Com. Member
Rory	Crawford	RSPB Scotland - Birdlife	Ex Com. Member <i>(replacing K. Brydson)</i>
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Ex.Com. Member
Bruno	Dachicourt	ETF	Ex Com. Member <i>(replacing J. Bigot)</i>
Barrie	Deas	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations	Ex.Com. Member
Ian	Gatt	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Observer
Charline	Gaudin	EBCD	Ex. Com. Member
Hugo C.	González García	ARVI-ANASOL	Ex.Com. Member - WG2 Chairman
André	Gueguen	CNPMEM	Ex. Com. Member
Louize	Hill	WWF-UK	Ex. Com. Member <i>(replacing I. Ball)</i>
Sam	Lambourn	NWWRAC Chairman	Ex. Com Member - NWWRAC Chairman
Daniel	Lefèvre	CRPBN	Observer - WG3 Chairman
Eamon	Mangan	Ministère de l'Agriculture de France	Member State
Eduardo	Míguez López	European Port and Auctions	Ex.Com. Member
Conor	Nolan	NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat

NWWRAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - PARIS 29 JANUARY 2010

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Lorcan	O'Cinnéide	IFPO	Observer - WG4 Chairman
Sean	O'Donoghue	Kyllibegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Ex. Com. Member
Gavin	Power	Irish South & West FPO	Ex.Com. Member
Brendan	Price	Irish Seal Sanctuary	Ex. Com. Member
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat
Stéphanie	Tachaires	CNPMEM	Observer
Héctor	Villa González	SGPM - MARM Spain	Member State

ANNEX II. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS EX COM MEETING

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Madrid, 8th of Sept 2009)	STATUS
NWWRAC Advice on EC Communication on Fishing Opportunities for 2010	COMPLETED – Submitted the 11 th of September 2009 and response received from the Commission
Letter to Commission regarding state of play of Haddock Focus Group	COMPLETED – Submitted the 5 th of November 2009 and response received from the Commission same as above
Letter to Member States requesting data provision for West of Scotland Haddock	COMPLETED – same as above
Letter to Ireland and Scotland - UK regarding change in timing of surveys for West of Scotland Anglerfish stock	COMPLETED – letter submitted the 11 th of September response received by Marine Scotland the 12 th of October
Letter on Review of Gear Marking Regulation (EC Reg. 356/2005)	COMPLETED – letter submitted the 11 th of September and response received from the Commission
Rewriting of letter to Commission requesting a Workshop on Market Policy issues in relation to Regulation 744/2008	POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER DISCUSSIONS
Memorandum on MLS for Scallop in the Channel	COMPLETED – Letter submitted the 11 th of September and response received by the Commission
Letter regarding improvement of quality of scientific advice and study of survival rates for discards of rays in Area VII; and cod and plaice in VIId	COMPLETED – Letter submitted the 11 th of November and response received by the Commission
Organisation of Focus Group on Review and Management measures for Irish Sea fisheries	COMPLETED – Meeting held the 30 th of September 2009 and report produced
Letter of Advice on Nephrops management	COMPLETED – Focus Group held the 3 rd of November and advice submitted to the Commission the 11 th of November
Follow-up meeting on CFP reform: preparation of advice	COMPLETED – Two focus Groups held in October and November and final opinion submitted to the Commission the 18 th of December 2009
Budgetary issues: management of deficit from financial year 3 - Ratification of budget proposal and work on alternative proposals for capping of travel costs	COMPLETED – Budget for Financial Year 5 approved with amended reimbursement rules at the GA of 28 th of October 2009.
Presentation of work plan and meetings calendar at the NWWRAC General Assembly	COMPLETED
Set procedure for decision of Focus Groups	COMPLETED